

102
*The Triumphant Exit of a Faithful
Servant of JESUS CHRIST,*

29
Set forth in a

S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D

On OCCASION of the DEATH
OF THE

Rev^d. *John Harrison, M. A.*

Pastor of a Church of CHRIST, at
Wethersfield, in Essex;

With some ADDITIONS. *K*

By *Thomas Davidson*, of Braintree.

*Publisch'd at the earnest Desire of the Church,
and many of the Hearers.*

L O N D O N :

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S E R M O N

On the

Rev. John A. M. A.



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S E R M O N, &c.

NOTHING but the dying Request of our Dear and Reverend Friend and Brother, whose Death we all so justly lament this Day, could have prevailed with me to appear in this Place, at this Time; being in many Respects unfit for such a Service, and having had but little Time to recollect my Thoughts, and put them in any tolerable Order, on that Portion of Scripture, which at the Desire of our dear deceased Friend, is to be the Subject of Discourse on this mournful Occasion; but in a Dependence on Divine Grace, I shall endeavour, as the Lord shall assist, and your Time allow, to open it up a little, and apply it.

It stands on Record in 2 *Tim.* iv. 6, 7, 8. *For I am now ready to be offered, and the Time of my Departure is at hand. — I have fought a good Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith. — Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the Righteous Judge, shall give me at that Day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

The Apostle *Paul*, the Author of this Epistle, wrote it when he was a Prisoner at *Rome*, but as he was twice a Prisoner there, 'tis hard to tell whether it was during his first or second Imprisonment; this Circumstance signifies little to our present Purpose, and therefore I say nothing more of it: Only 'tis more than probable he had some secret ~~Message~~ impress'd on his Mind by the Spirit of God, or from some providential Circumstances, was made to gather, both that

his Continuance in this World should not be long, and that he should finish his Course by Martyrdom. — And as a faithful Soldier of Jesus Christ, who had fought manfully under his Banner; being now about to leave the Field of Battle, he hands down the Standard, or Banner, he had through Grace been enabled to display in the World for him, and the Truth of his Gospel, to *Timothy*, a young Minister, whom he was to leave behind him; and at the same Time that he puts it into his Hand, he gives him a solemn Charge to display, fight under, and defend it in the same Manner he had done, ver. 1, 2. *I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the Quick and the Dead, at his Appearing, and his Kingdom: Preach the Word, be instant in Season, and out of Season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all Long-suffering and Doctrine.* — One would think he gives this complex Charge to *Timothy* (and indeed not to him only, but to every faithful Minister of the Gospel to the End of Time) in the same Way and Manner, we may suppose, a General would give Orders to his Officers in the Heat of Action; who, from an earnest Concern about the Issue of the Day, and seeing the Enemy ready to break in on all Sides, and how many Things are necessary to be instantly done; is at a kind of Loss what to bid them do first, and therefore gives forth as many Orders as he possibly can in one Breath.

Like a wise and skillful Veteran, who had been long in the Service, and was not ignorant of the Enemy's Devices; in the 3d Verse he at once assigns a Reason why he gave so solemn a Charge to *Timothy*, and warns him of an approaching Evil, even an Attack which he foresaw would be made on the Truth and Holiness of the Gospel; for these two stand and fall together. — When once Persons are brought to be careless about, and left to give up with the Truth of the Gospel, the Holiness of it will soon follow. — And how can it be otherwise? for *the Sanctification of the Spirit is carried on through the Belief of the Truth*, 2 Thes.

Thes. ii. 13. *The Time will come, says he, when they will not endure sound Doctrine; but after their own Lusts shall they heap to themselves Teachers, having itching Ears, ver. 4. And they shall turn away their Ears from the Truth, and shall be turned unto Fables.—* After which Warning, he doubles his Charge, gives him another complex one, which he delivers with so much Earnestness and Concern, as if he would have him obey it all at once. ver. 5. *But watch thou in all Things, endure Afflictions, do the Work of an Evangelist, make full Proof of thy Ministry. —* And then he adds in the Words of the Text, *for I am now ready to be offered, &c. —* As if he had said, do all this, the rather that I am now about to quit the Field, and going to receive the glorious Reward; and as you would wish to make such an Exit, as I am now thro' Grace to do; as you would wish to come off a Conqueror, and receive the Victor's Crown from the Lord the Righteous Judge, keep up the Warfare, maintain the glorious Struggle to the End of your Life, as I have done. *For I am now ready, &c.*

In which Words we have these three Things remarkable.

1. The Frame and Disposition of the Apostle's Mind in the View of leaving this World, *I am now ready to be offered.* — I don't lay so much Stress on the Sound of the Word *ready* in our Translation, as on the evident Sense of the Phrase in the Original, ἤδη σπένδομαι, *I am already poured out*, so some render it. There seems to be in the Expression an evident Allusion to the Libations which were used in sacrificing, when they poured Wine on the Head of the Sacrifice, which according to some, render'd it certain, that that, on which the Wine was poured, and no other, should at that Time be offered. — The Apostle uses the same Words, speaking of his own Death, *Phil. ii. 17. Yea, and if I be offered, or poured forth, upon the Sacrifice and Service of your Faith, I rejoice, &c.*

'Tis

'Tis as much as to say, in whatever Shape Death may appear, 'tis not at all frightful to me, though I should be called, as I know I shall, to seal the Truth I have preached, with my Blood. I am in this beforehand with my Persecutors; I have already offered myself, in Resolution, and when it comes to the Push, I shall not take a Moment to hesitate about it: I am ready for them, ready for the great Event, and as willing to offer my Life as they can possibly be to take it.—*And the Time of my Departure is at Hand*, viz. Out of this World by Death: — Some translate the Word to be dissolved; thus Death is called a Dissolution. — It signifies also, To return Home: So the Word is used, *Luke xii. 36.* To be dismissed out of Life, in this Sense, the Apostle uses the Word, *Phil. i. 23.* The Verb in these Places and the Text is the same, ἀναλύω.

Both Expressions put together point out the Belief he had that this World was not the Place of his Abode, he neither expected nor desired to stay long in it, but was ready waiting for a Dismission; and instead of being afraid with any Amazement at Death, even in its most formidable Shape, with a peaceful and easy Serenity of Mind, he looks forward to it with Pleasure and Satisfaction. O blessed and desirable Attainment!

2. A reflex View which the Apostle takes of what had been his Conduct in this World, since the Time he began to fight under the Redeemer's Banner; and it was such as yielded him Peace and holy Joy in the View of leaving the World for *good and all.* *I have fought a good Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith.* I have not lived a Life of worldly Ease and Pleasure on Earth; on the contrary, it has been one continued Conflict with the Powers of Darkness and wicked Men.—But that has not moved me. I think never the worse of Christ and his Cause, that I have been obliged to fight my Way through Tribulations, Trials and Afflictions of various Kinds: For it has been a *good Fight*; and all the Hardships I have met with

with have never made me to this Day faint, or think of turning back. *None of them have moved me, neither have I counted my Life dear unto me: And now I have finished my Course with Joy, and the Ministry I have received of the Lord Jesus, Acts xx. 24.*

3. The comfortable and believing Prospect he takes of what was awaiting him in the other World, as the gracious and free Reward of all his Sufferings and Labours in this, *Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, &c.* In this he was a Follower of Christ: For he went to the Crown by the Way of the Cross: *And for the Joy that was set before him, he endured the Cross and despised the Shame, Heb. xii. 2.* Faith can look through and beyond the dark and gloomy Dispensations of Providence in this World, and see an eternal Sun-shine on the other Side of Death and the Grave; — It views the Glory after to be revealed as promised, and therefore certain; it as it were lifts the good Things contained in the Promises out of their State of Futurity and Distance, and renders them near and present to the Soul: *For it is the Evidence of Things not seen, and the Substance of Things hoped for, Heb. xi. 1.*

What I have farther to offer from these Words, shall be comprehended in these three following Observations, which I shall explain in this Order, and then apply.

- I. Every true Servant and Disciple of Jesus Christ, from a Persuasion that this World is not the Place of his Abode and Rest, should be willing and ready, from gracious Principles, to leave it whenever he in Providence calls him so to do.
- II. That in Order to attain this desirable Frame of Mind, Christians ought diligently and earnestly to ply the several Duties which lie before them, as Disciples of Jesus Christ.
- III. To encourage all the sincere Servants and Followers of Christ to fight the good Fight, &c. — There is a Crown of Righteousness laid up for them.

them: An Eternity of Bliss awaits them in the other World.

Obs. 1. Every true Servant and Disciple of Jesus Christ, &c. — The Truth contained in the first Part of this Observation, namely, that this World is not the Place of the Christian's Abode and Rest, will be evident from these following Considerations, which may serve as a Ground of the Persuasion spoken of. — 1. The Christian by his New Birth is formed for Things higher than this World can afford. There's nothing in it suited to his Taste as a New Creature, or that can satisfy the Desires of that divine Principle, which is implanted in the Soul in Regeneration; yea, I may say, there is every Thing in it sufficient to make him heartily sick of it, and long to be out of it; for it is full of Sin and Vanity. — Wherever we cast our Eyes in this World, we see nothing but Sin, or the Effects of it; at best 'tis but a lying Vanity, that yields nothing but Vexation of Spirit. — The Christian, when acted by Principles agreeable to the New Nature, can take Pleasure in nothing below the Enjoyment of God; can delight in nothing, but in so far as God is to be seen, and enjoyed in it. — The Language of the renewed Soul is, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth I desire besides thee*, Psal. lxxiii. 25. These holy and gracious Desires inseparable from renewed Souls, are implanted in the Heart, by him whose Workmanship the New Creature is; and as they proceed from him, so they lead the Soul back to him, in the fervent Breathings of Faith and Love: For Grace in the Soul of the Believers, *is a Well of Water, springing up into everlasting Life*, John iv. 14. — Nothing can satisfy the Desires of a renewed Soul but God, and He that satisfieth the Desires of every living Thing, by giving them plentifully Things agreeable to their several Natures, will never put the New Creature off with less than he has taught it, to seek and desire even the Enjoyment of himself in a better World, where every

every one shall be *filled with all the Fulness of God*, Eph. iii. 19.

2. By his Profession as a Christian, he's called, yea bound to renounce and leave it in Point of Desire and Affection, and that in Conformity to Christ. Our blessed Lord was in the World, not as a Native, but a Stranger; and he had no Inheritance in it, tho' he was Lord of all: he was dead to, while he lived in it. In Conformity to him, his Disciples are called to renounce it as a Portion, and a Place of Abode: this, in a particular Manner, distinguishes them from the Men of the World, who desire and know no other Portion. — When the Christian is separated from them by Regenerating Grace; his Sentiments of Things are quite chang'd, he no more looks on the World as his Portion and Resting-place, but views it as a thorough-Fare or Passage, thro' which he is to go into the heavenly Inheritance, the true, the eternal Rest, prepared for him in the other World. — The Language of Christ, in this Case, to all his Followers is, as in *Mic. ii. 10. Arise ye and depart, for this is not your Rest: because it is polluted.* — *Come with me from Lebanon, my Spouse; with me from Lebanon, &c.* Song iv. 8. In Consequence of which call the Language of the Christian is with the Apostle, *Gal. vi. 14. God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World.*

3. The Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and Intercession of Jesus Christ, have all of them a particular View to this. — Thro' the Death of his Cross, all true Believers are crucified and dead to this present evil World: for *he gave himself for our Sins, that he might deliver us from it*, Gal. i. 4. He rose from the Dead, that we might rise with him to a Newness of Life; hence we are said to be *planted together in the Likeness of his Resurrection*, Rom. vi. 5. He did not rise from the Grave, with a View to continue in this World, but that he might leave it altogether, and go to his Father. — *I ascend to my Father*, John xx. With a View to this Christians are exhorted to prove their be-

ing risen with him, by their seeking the Things that are above, where he sits at the Right Hand of God, Col. iii. 1. — He ascended up on high, and left our World, that he might in due Time gather all his People out of it, and bring them to the same happy Place with himself, *John* xiv. 2, 3. — *I go to prepare a Place for you. And if I go and prepare a Place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.* — For this also he is interceding at the Father's Right Hand above, thus in *John* xvii. in which we have a Sample of his Intercession, ver. 24. *Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.* — From all which Considerations, 'tis methinks, an undeniable Truth, that this World is not the Place of our Abode and Rest; and if this is the Case, then 'tis our Wisdom, as well as Duty, to be prepared and ready to leave it at the Lord's Call, and we know not how soon that may come.

This Readiness the Christian should be in, is Two-fold; Habitual, in Respect of our State; and Actual, in Respect of our Frame.

1. Habitual, in Respect of our State, in which there must be both a RELATIVE and REAL Change. — By Nature we are Criminals in the Sight of God, Enemies to him, Children of the Devil, and of Wrath, lying under the Curse of the Law. — Dying in this State makes Persons miserable beyond Thought or Expression: for it fixes them in the Pit of everlasting Destruction, out of which there is no Redemption.

But by Grace there's a blessed and glorious Change made in our State, when we are justified freely through the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ; in Consequence of which, the Sentence of Death is taken off, a free Pardon is put into the Sinner's Hand: he is received into the Family of God, stands in the Relation of a Child to him, is made an Heir of God, and a Joint-Heir with Christ. — Moreover, there must be a REAL Change made in our State; by Nature we are dead in Trespasses and Sins, altogether destitute of a Principle of spiritual Life; dead unto God, as really

as Men are dead unto this World, when there is a Separation between their Souls and their Bodies; for God the Life of our Souls is departed from us, *we are without him in the World*, Eph. ii. 12.—And as Death, in a natural Sense, is the Entrance of Corruption, makes the Body a loathsome stinking Carcass, not to be beheld without the utmost Dislike and Horror; and the longer it continues in Death, it grows worse and worse, sinks deeper in Corruption, which makes it necessary to bury it out of Sight; so it is with the Soul that is spiritually dead, it is unholy, filthy and polluted all over.—Sin, which is the Corruption of the Soul, reigns in the natural Man, in all the Faculties of his Soul, and all the Members of his Body, and while he is in this State, his living lively unmortified Lusts gather Strength, and multiply as Vermin do in a dead Body.—This is a humbling, but true View of our State by Nature, the State in which Jesus Christ finds us, when he works this real Change we are speaking of; and it is effectuated by his quickening the dead Soul in the Day of Power, and making it spiritually alive, by his Holy Spirit, passively received, whereby a new Principle of Action is communicated; in Consequence of which, the Soul is enabled to believe in Jesus Christ, and actively unite with him; and from this Zeal, and actual Union with him, arises a continual Communication of sanctifying Influences, whereby the Soul is enabled daily to die unto Sin, and live unto God; *to cleanse itself from all Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, and to perfect Holiness in the Fear of God*, 2 Cor. vii. 1.

The RELATIVE Change in our State, is necessary to found our Right and Title to Heaven, and the REAL one to make us meet for it; answering the Two-fold Unfitness for Heaven, all Mankind by Nature labour under; namely, Legal and Moral. By our sinning against God, we forfeited all Right and Title to Heaven, the Law forbids our entering there; by the Sentence of it we are attainted as Rebels against our Sovereign; and by our being unholy and polluted, we are

morally unfit for it, as thereby we can neither relish the holy Exercises, nor the holy Enjoyments of that happy Place. — But by the Righteousness of Jesus our Lord, which is imputed to us in Justification, the Attainder is taken off, and the Right we lost regained ; and by the sanctifying Influences of his Holy Spirit, *we are made meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.*

2. Actual in respect of our Frame and Circumstances, the former gives us a safe, but this an abundant Entrance into Heaven, 2 *Pet.* i. 10, 11. — The one secures our Souls, so as in the Issue of Things they cannot perish ; the other has such an Influence on the inward Temper and Frame of the Mind, as makes and keeps one easy and comfortable in all possible Events. — On this Head, for Brevity sake, I shall do little more than mention the following Things. — Such as maintaining and keeping up Communion and Fellowship with God in all holy Duties, *viz.* Secret Prayer, reading and hearing the Word, Meditation, Praises, solemn Fasting and Humiliation, as ones Case and providential Circumstances may require, and the Lord's Supper. These are instituted Means of Heaven's Appointment, for our holding a Correspondence with that blessed Place, and in which God communicates the Influences of his Grace to our Souls. — This holy Fellowship not only fills the Mind with a divine Serenity and Peace, but 'tis of an assimilating Nature : for Fellowship begets Likeness. — It was this that fitted *Enoch* for his Removal out of our World. — *He walked with God, and he was not, for God took him,* Gen. v. 24. — Purity of Heart and Conscience, is another Part of this actual Readiness, and springs from the other ; the more we converse with God, the more holy, circum-spect and tender we shall be in all Manner of Conversation, and it will make us stand at an awful Distance, from every Thing that may occasion or strengthen a standing Quarrel or Controversy between God and the Soul. — *Herein, says the Apostle, do I exercise myself to have always a Conscience void of Offense toward God,*

God, and toward Man, Acts xxiv. 16. A daily improving of the Blood of Atonement by Faith; of Christ Jesus as made of God unto us Sanctification, is absolutely necessary to this. — Again, a Heart weaned from a present World, is inseperable from this Frame of Mind we are speaking of. — That Person whose Heart cleaves to a present World; whose Heart sinks or elates, as it smiles and frowns; whose Heart is rack'd with its Cares, and full of its Projects, is far from being actually ready to remove out of it. — When such a one comes to die, he is like unripe Fruit, that requires a considerable Pull to pluck it off the Tree; but the Christian, whose Heart is weaned from, and dead to the World, is like Fruit fully ripe, that drops at the first Touch. — 'Tis Matter of deep Regret, that there are few such Christians to be found. — Moreover, Diligence in our Generation Work, in performing the several Duties which lie before us, as Christians, and Members of civil Society with Diligence and Dispatch, belongs to this actual Readiness. — The Time of our Continuance in this World is both short and uncertain; the Duties we have to do are many and great, and much depends on their being done in their Season. — There's no Room for Slumbering or Idleness; loytering in the Day-time makes a restless and uneasy Night: but *the Sleep of a labouring Man is sweet*, Eccles. v. 12. David was ready, in this Respect, and it made his Removal easy and pleasant; for it is part of the savory Character he left behind him, *after he had served his own Generation by the Will of God, he fell on sleep, and was laid unto his Fathers*, Acts xiii. 36. — A well grounded Hope and Expectation of a better Life in the other World, is also an essential Branch of this Readiness. — When I say an essential Branch, let it be noted, that I don't speak of the Measure, but the Truth and Reality of this Hope: and for Persons to pretend to be willing to leave this World without it, speaks out either brutish Stupidity, a delusive Security, or desperate Impatience. — In all which Cases, Persons are far from being ready, however willing they may seem to go into
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the other World.—This well-grounded Hope, is that which the Apostle expresses in Chap. i. of this Epistle, ver. 12. *For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that Day.*—A firm Belief of the great Event, *viz.* of our leaving this World at the Hour of Death, animating to Watchfulness, and waiting must not be excluded from it.—That the Lord will come to and call each of us, is an undeniable Truth, but when, we are altogether uncertain; and this is so ordered, that we may avoid Security, and be like the Servants our Lord speaks of, *Luke xii. 35, 36.* who being wearied with the Fatigues of the Day, and longing to go to rest, are waiting for their Lord's Coming, *that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately.*—To all which I may add, the having a due Regard to what the Scripture calls a setting our House in Order, *Isa. xxxviii. 1.* Endeavouring as much as possible to have our worldly Affairs in such a Situation, as they may afford no matter of Quarrel and Dispute among surviving Friends; Religion may not suffer when we are gone, and no one may be wronged.

By comparing and putting these Things together, we may have some Notion of this actual Preparation to leave the World at the Lord's Call; and where, thro' Grace, one is helped to such a Preparation, there will surely be a correspondent Willingness. This brings me to the

II. Observation, That in order to attain this desirable Frame of Mind, Christians ought diligently and earnestly to ply the several Duties which lie before them, as Disciples of Jesus Christ.—Here I shall confine myself to the Things mentioned in the Text, *viz. I have fought, &c.—I have finish'd, &c. I have kept, &c.* and explain them in order, as they lye before us. —

First, *I have fought a good Fight.* Jesus Christ our Lord is cloathed with that great and honourable Character the Captain of our Salvation; and as he fought his Way to the Crown through an Host of Adversaries, so must all his Disciples if they would follow him :

him: For they are *predestinated to be conformed to his Image*, Rom. viii. 29. — conformed to him in Suffering as well as Glory. — The Way to the Kingdom lies through a Field of Battle, and there is no avoiding it; they must fight every Inch of their Way with Courage and Resolution: *For the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth Violence, and the Violent take it by Force.* — Now every Christian when he believes in Jesus Christ, lifts himself under his Banner to fight his Battles; he gives up his Name to him, and engages in his Strength to war against all his Enemies, whether within or without him. — These Enemies are strong and powerful; and if the Captain of Salvation did not furnish us with Weapons proper for this good Fight, and Courage and Skill to manage them too, we could do nothing in this Warfare. — Other Commanders may put Weapons in the Hands of their Soldiers, but they can't give them Strength and Courage, but Jesus Christ gives both. — The Adversaries we have to fight with in this Warfare are, (1.) The Lusts of our own Hearts, the Lusts of the Flesh and of the Spirit. — And Oh, how difficult and hard is it to fight against these! so hard and difficult, that it is compared to the cutting off a right Hand and Foot, and the plucking out a right Eye. When we are striving against them, and aiming at putting them to Death, how often do they screen themselves under something that is dear unto us, and start up before us, like another self, crying out for Quarter, saying as *Peter* did, on another Occasion, to his Lord: *Master, spare thyself.* And when at any Time we hearken to them in this (which, alas! we too often do) Oh what sad Havock do they make in our Souls! How is the Conscience burdened with Guilt and wounded, whereby we become like one who is faint through the Loss of Blood and Spirits; and oftentimes 'tis long (if ever) ere we recover our former Strength. — Oh the Need of keeping a watchful and a jealous Eye upon these secret Enemies within us, and of warring daily against them, because they *war against our Souls*, 1 Pet. ii. 11. (2.) The Powers
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of Darkneſs, the Devil and his black Legions, theſe alſo we have to encounter in this good Fight. — Theſe Adverſaries are at once powerful and ſubtil. Hence Satan gets the Names of the Strong Man, and of the Old Serpent. Great is his Power in the material, but greater ſtill in the intellectual World: For he knows human Nature thoroughly, is intimately acquainted with the weak Side of every Individual of Mankind, and can ſuit his Temptations ſo artfully to their ſeveral Weakneſſes, as to carry them captive at his Pleaſure; excepting ſuch who are engaged in this good Fight, whoſe Minds are fortified by the Grace of God againſt him.—'Tis only by the Teaching of the Holy Spirit, and a Courſe of Chriſtian Experience, that we come to know his Devices; ſometimes he acts as a cunning Serpent, exerciſing Wiles and Deceit; ſometimes as a roaring Lion, threatening immediate Deſtruction, and though 'tis much more dangerous to meet him in the firſt Shape than the laſt, yet 'tis neceſſary we beware of, and reſiſt him in both. *Ephes. vi. 11. Put on the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to ſtand againſt the Wiles of the Devil. — For we wreſtle not againſt Fleſh and Blood, but againſt Principalities, againſt Powers, againſt the Rulers of the Darkneſs of this World, againſt ſpiritual Wickedneſs in high Places. — 1 Pet. v. 8. Be ſober, be vigilant; becauſe your Adverſary the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about, ſeeking whom he may devour.* — (3.) A preſent evil World is another grand Enemy we have to do with in this good Fight. — The Things of the World, the Riches, the Honours and Pleaſures of it. Not that theſe are abſolutely evil and unlawful in themſelves, but only in ſo far as the Love of them is inordinate, the Purſuit after them keen and eager, and the Enjoyment of them leads the Mind away from God. *1 Tim. vi. 8, 9, 10, 11, compared with 17, 18, 19 Verſes.* — The Cuſtoms of the World, as well its vain as its vile Cuſtoms: For in theſe Things the Diſciples of Chriſt are not to be conformed to the World, but to be transformed by the renewing of their Minds, *Rom. xii.*

2. How else can they prove that they are come out from among them, and are sepeate, 2 Cor. vi. 17. but by their being different from them in their Spirit and Ways — I may add the Men of the World: For Christians many Times have no small Struggle with them. There is a rooted Hatred and Prejudice in the Hearts of natural Men to the Children of God; and however they may have a kind of Love and Esteem for some of them, because of the Gifts of Nature or acquired Abilities which they have in common with themselves; or for their moral Qualifications, whereby they are fitted for being useful and comfortable Members of Society, yet as Saints, as Children of God renewed in the Spirit of their Minds in Regeneration, and manifesting it in the Whole of their Practice and Walk in these Respects, if not openly, yet secretly they both hate and despise them.— Sometimes the Men of the World smile upon Christians, and thereby try to allure them out of the Way of Truth and Holiness; sometimes they frown upon them, and thereby try to fright them out of it by their Scoffs, cruel Mockings, Calumnies and Reproaches; and when it is in the Power of their Hands, by open and violent Persecution of their Persons, even to the taking away their Lives.

Sometimes their Attacks are more directly formed against the Truth of the Gospel, as it is laid down in the Word of God, and professed by Christians, endeavouring to corrupt it by their vain Babblings, carnal Reasonings, and the false Glosses which they would put upon it; some of this Sort the Apostle mentions in this Epistle, and complains of, Chap. ii. 16, 17, 18. *But shun prophane and vain Babblings; for they will increafe unto more Ungodliness. And their Word will eat as doth a Canker, of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus, who concerning the Truth have erred, &c. Ch. iii. 8. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the Truth: Men of corrupt Minds, reprobate concerning the Faith. — And Verse 14. of this Chap. Alexander the Coppersmith did me much evil.—Of whom be thou aware also: For he hath greatly withstood our*
C Words.

Words. — Now in all these Things the Servants and Disciples of Christ, according to the Nature of the Warfare in which they are engaged, and by the spiritual Weapons of the Gospel, they are to oppose and fight against the World; the Things, the Customs, and the Men of it, shewing themselves valiant for the Lord and his Truth. — These are the Enemies, my Brethren, we have to encounter with in this good Fight; and however hard and difficult it may be to Flesh and Blood, yet it will appear to be a good Fight, if we consider these three Things.

1st. In regard it is a lawful War and Fight. — No War is or can be good to the Party that enters into it without regard to Justice and Equity; therefore Princes in their Declarations of War against one another, commonly say, *Trusting to the Goodness of their Cause, and relying upon God, &c.* None can speak this Language with greater Justness than the Saints: For they have indeed Law and Right on their Side. The Enemies of the Christian aim at nothing less than his Life, the Life of his Soul; and Nature itself teaches Men to defend themselves by all lawful Means against wicked Murderers who come to take away their Life. The grand Adversary Satan, is expressly called the Murderer by him who cannot lie, *John* viii. 44. And this Consideration, together with the Command of the Captain of our Salvation to resist him, steadfastly makes this Fight a good one to us. —

2dly, 'Tis a good Fight, in regard we hurt none in it but the Enemies of God, and of our own Souls; none but the Brood of Hell. — In Wars among Men, let the Cause in which they fight be ever so good, and the Victory too should declare itself in favour of Truth and Justice, yet it must give Pain to the Conqueror's Heart, if he has but the least Degree of Humanity, to see what Havock is made among Creatures of his own Species, so that (as one well words it) The Hero must needs struggle hard with the Man before he can rejoice in his Victory, at least it is a considerable Draw-back upon it. — But here none but

but the Devil and the Body of Sin are Sufferers; and who would refuse to act offensively against them? None who love God and their own Souls, none who are concerned in earnest about eternal Salvation.

3dly, 'Tis a good Fight, if we consider that however hard and difficult it is during its Continuance, yet the Issue of it is certain Victory. No earthly Commander can promise this to his Soldiers, yea many Times where there is the greatest Probability of overcoming, they meet with a Disappointment; but Jesus Christ the Captain of our Salvation leads all his Soldiers to certain Victory; so certain that they cannot fail of it: For it is exemplified in his own Person.—He holds out the Crown spoken of in the Text to every one of them, and assures them, *that as he overcame, and is now set down with his Father in his Throne, so they also shall overcome, and have it granted to them to sit with him in his Throne*, Rev. iii. 21.

Yea, not only is the Victory certain, but during the Continuance of the Fight he strengthens them for it, and stands by them in it; He is their Second in all Cases. *A present Help in Time of Trouble.*—There is no such Thing as the forlorn Hope in his Camp, if he calls to hard and difficult Service he gives suitable Strength for it; even *when we are pressed out of Measure above Strength, and we as it were despair even of Life*, yet then he delivers, and suffers not the Enemy to triumph, 2 Cor. i. 8, 9, 10. *For he strengtheneth the Spoiled against the Strong, so that the Spoiled shall come against the Fortrefs*, Amos v. 9. Say then, Christian, is not this a good Fight in which ye are engaged? And if ye would manage it successfully, the following Things must be attended to. —

1. Take the Weapons Christ has appointed: For if we use any other we can't expect Success; we have a particular Enumeration of these Weapons in Eph. vi. 11, and downwards. — *Put on the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the Wiles of the Devil: For we wrestle not against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the Darknefs of this World, against spiritual Wicked-*

ness in high Places. Wherefore take unto you the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil Day. — Stand therefore, having your Loins girt about with Truth, and having on the Breast-plate of Righteousness, and your Feet shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace; above all, taking the Shield of Faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery Darts of the wicked one. And take the Helmet of Salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all Perseverance. — These are the Weapons, they are suited to the Nature of the Warfare, and none other will do. — When we are conflicting with the Powers of Darkness, and in Danger of being overcome by strong Temptations, in this Case reasoning won't do; the Enemy laughs at the Shaking of that Spear; but the Sword of the Spirit in the Hand of Faith will make all the Devils in Hell tremble: For they have no Armour Proof against this Weapon, it is a tried one, there's none like it. — When we are called to defend the Truth of the Gospel against Hereticks and Gainfayers, we must still have Recourse to the Magazine of Scripture, and fetch our Armour from thence, if we would do any thing to purpose. — Thus the Apostle lays it down as a Qualification of a true Gospel Minister and faithful Soldier of Jesus Christ, that he hold fast the faithful Word — that he may be able by sound Doctrine both to exhort and convince the Gain-fayers — *Tit. i. 9.* And when we have the Men of the World to deal with as Persecutors and Slanderers, we are commanded to arm ourselves with the same Mind as was in Christ, *1 Pet. iv. 1.* Patience in suffering, and a holy committing of ourselves to him that judgeth righteously. —

2. Let us beware of going out against our Enemies in our own Strength, otherwise we shall soon find that the weakest of them is more than a Match for us; and they will triumph over us as the Philistines did over *Samson* when his Strength departed from him. — We must

must go out in the Name and Strength of the Captain of our Salvation, as the Apostle speaks in Chap. ii. of this Epistle, Ver. 1. *Thou therefore, my Son, be strong in the Grace that is in Christ Jesus.*—And in the fore-cited Text, *Eph. vi.* before the Apostle mentions either the Enemies we have to do with, or the Weapons we are to use in this good Fight, Ver. 10, says he, *Be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might.*—Surely in Jehovah have I Strength, may every Christian say, and this is the only Way to be an Overcomer. —

3. If we would manage this good Fight successfully, we must beware of holding any secret Correspondence with the Enemy ; that is, looking with a wishful Eye to, or making secret Provision for any beloved Lust. —This is a Crime that is justly accounted Treachery among Men, and is punished with Death. Let us beware of dallying with Temptations, or yielding to them in the least, lest God should be provoked to leave us in the Hands of our Enemies, and give us over to their Power.

4. We must never beat a Parley, nor grant any Cessation of Arms. — Some Sins and Temptations are of such a Nature, that it is not safe so much as to enter into speaking Terms with them ; for if we do, 'tis an hundred to one but they obtain an Advantage over us ; therefore when they offer to speak with us, our safest Course is to stop our Ears and flee from them : For there is no other Way of overcoming them.—This would be thought a strange Way of overcoming an Enemy among Men: On the contrary, 'tis with them a Sign of being overcome ; but in this Case 'tis quite otherwise. There are two Sins the Apostle particularly mentions that are of the Nature I now speak of, namely, youthful Lusts, and a covetous Desire of the Things of a present World. *2 Tim. ii. 22. Flee youthful Lusts.* — *1 Tim. vi. 9, 10, 11. But they that will be rich fall into Temptation, and a Snare, and many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown Men in Destruction and Perdition. — For the Love of Money is the Root of all Evil, which while some have coveted after,*

after, they have erred from the Faith, and pierced themselves through with many Sorrows. — But thou, O Man of God flee these Things.

Neither must we grant any Cessation of Arms, or cease to fight against them one Moment; for this also gives them certain Advantage over us. — The Enemy is restless in tempting, and therefore the Christian Soldier must not think of Rest while he is in the Field of Battle. — 1 Pet. v. 8, 9. *Be vigilant; because your Adversary the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. — Whom resist stedfast in the Faith. —*

5. We must keep our Ground, and never turn our Back, for there is no Armour for that Part. — Jam. iv. 7. *Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you.* In no case must we yield a Point to the Enemy, but still set our Face like a Flint against him, and learn to oppose him in all Shapes, without giving Way in the least. — 'Tis true, the Christian at some times may be sorely beset, and ready to faint; but when this is the Case, there must be the renewed Actings of Faith on Christ, these bring in new Measures of Strength: *for he giveth Power to the Faint, and to them that have no Might, he increaseth Strength,* Isa. xl. 29. This was the Psalmist's Case, *Psal. xxvii. 13. I had fainted unless I had believed. Psal. xciv. 17, 18. Unless the Lord had been my Help, my Soul had almost dwelt in Silence. When I said, my Foot slippeth, thy Mercy, O Lord, held me up.*

Lastly, We must keep the Captain of our Salvation full in our Eye; and always keep in Remembrance that his Eye is upon us; this will make us, in the Strength of his Grace, resolutely determine, that we will either conquer or die. — Never any who were brought to this, ever fell a Prey to the Enemy. — He has the Crown in his Hand, and every View of that will animate us with fresh Vigour. — *Be thou faithful unto the Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life,* Rev. ii. 10.

SECONDLY, *I have finished my Course.*

'Tis probable there is an Allusion in these metaphorical

rical Expressions in the Text, to the Exercises in use among the *Greeks*, in what they call'd the *Olympick Games*; and as in the other two, the Apostle seems to have in View that of a Soldier, Champion, or Wrestler; so in this, that of a Racer; one who is running for a Prize. — The Christian Life is frequently compared in Scripture to a Race, on Account of the Progress we are to make in it, and the Necessity of holy Diligence and Activity, in order to our doing so. By the Course then in the Text, which the Apostle says he had finished, and which all true Believers must finish, we are to understand that Measure of Obedience and Sufferings, allotted to every one, by the sovereign Disposal of a holy and wise God: for as in every Race, there is a certain definite limited Spot of Ground, over which they who run it, are to go before they can claim the Prize; so there is a certain Measure of Obedience and Sufferings, which every Christian is to fill up before he enters on the Enjoyment of the Crown mentioned in the latter Part of the Text. Only we must carry it along with us, that we are not to draw the Parallel so far, as to imagine that any one can claim the Crown as the Reward of his own doing and suffering; by no Means, this is contrary to the whole Tenor of the Gospel. But of this more afterwards, on the third Observation.—The finishing of this Course, as we have explain'd it, carries these following Things in it.

1. Diligence and Painfulness in doing and working for Christ, and Patience in suffering for him; in the Strength of divine Grace, endeavouring to bear and do his Will, without quarrelling or repining. — Engaging in Duty with Alacrity and Chearfulness, not like Persons who are driven to it, and have a Force put upon them; but like them who know and feel that Obedience is their Life and Privilege, as well as Duty; and being assiduous and diligent in it, so as to abound in the Work of the Lord. And all this in Opposition to laziness and loytering. — Men who run in a Race don't go at an ordinary Pace, they exert their utmost Vigour, and put themselves on the Stretch. To
this

this Purpose the Apostle speaks, *Phil. iii. 13, 14. Brethren I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one Thing I do, forgetting those Things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those Things which are before, I press toward the Mark, for the Prize of the High-Calling of God in Christ Jesus.* —

2. A keeping the Lord's Way, and making Progress in it, without going aside, either to the right Hand or to the left.—Racers must not go out of the Course to make it shorter or easier to themselves; 'tis contrary to Rule, and they who do so, have no Title to the Prize. — Even so Christians must not study their own carnal Ease, by going out of the Way of Duty or Suffering, when the Lord calls them to either the one or the other. Universal Obedience without any Reserve, is that which Jesus Christ calls for from all his Disciples, *John xv. 14. Ye are my Friends, if ye do WHATSOEVER I command you.* Grace sooner or later brings them to this, *Psal cxix. 6. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have Respect to all thy Commandments, v. 128. Therefore I esteem all thy Precepts concerning all Things to be right, and I hate every false Way.* — When he calls us to Sufferings, and bearing the Cross, we must not in a sinful Way decline them; for this is to go out of the Course, and such as have done so, have in the End, paid dearly for it. — Whatever Duty, whatever Cross is laid in our Way must be submitted to: for in no Case will the Lord suffer us to pick and choose, or to stand and dispute with Duty. — *Jonah* did so, and went out of the Way of the Duty the Lord called him to, but he brought him back by weeping crosses. — *Peter* went aside out of the Way of the Cross, when he was called to confess his Lord in a suffering Condition; but he met with that in his Way, that made him go mourning to his Grave. — Instances of this kind are set before us, that we may beware of treading in the same Steps, and that we may always remember that necessary Word, *so run that ye may obtain, 1 Cor. ix. 24.*

Moreover, we must make Progress in this Course; for as Racers strive to get before others, and to be first,
so

so Christians should study a holy kind of Emulation, and go before one another, *by seeking to excel*, 1 Cor. xiv. 12.

3. To the finishing of this Course, belongs a keeping from every Thing that unfits us for it, or is a Hindrance to us in it; I mean the Lusts and Corruptions of our own Hearts, and the Temptations and Snares with which we are surrounded on every Side. — These are like Weights to the Christian, which make him go a slow Pace, and move heavily in the Way of God. — *Heb. xii. 1. Let us lay aside every Weight, and the Sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with Patience the Race set before us.* To this same Purpose the Apostle speaks, 1 Cor. ix. 25. *And every Man that striveth for the Mastery, is temperate in all Things: Now they do it to obtain a corruptible Crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly: So fight I, not as one that beateth the Air: but I keep under my Body, and bring it into Subjection: lest that by any Means, when I have preached the Gospel to others, I myself should be a Cast-away.*

Lastly, the finishing of this Course implies, a persevering therein to the End without fainting, or giving over; if we do so before we come to the Goal, we have done with the Prize. — *If any Man draw back, my Soul shall have no Pleasure in him, Heb. x. 38. But he that endureth to the End, the same shall be saved, Mark xiii. 13.* Oh how many have seem'd to set out fair in this Course, and to run well for some considerable Time, who yet have tired before they came to the End of it, and thereby have fallen short of the Prize! *Ye did run well, who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the Truth? Gal. v. 7.* In Opposition to this, we are commanded *to run with PATIENCE the Race that is set before us, Heb. xii. 1.* to hold on in an even steady Course, without sitting down, or looking back, but like the Racer, keeping our Eye principally on that Part of our Way, which lies between us and the Goal, *forgetting the Things which are behind, and reaching forth to those Things which are before, Phil. iii. 13.* And when we thus stedfastly and unweariedly hold on to the End, then do we indeed, in a strict and proper Sense finish our Course. —

THIRDLY, *I have kept the Faith,*

By the Faith here I humbly conceive we are principally to understand the Word and Doctrine of Faith; the glorious Gospel. — 'Tis true, the Grace of Faith is not excluded; for the Doctrine of Faith cannot be kept in the Sense of the Text without it: But it is the first which is chiefly meant. — The Word Faith is often taken in this Sense in the New Testament. *Acts vi. 7.*—*And a great Company of the Priests were obedient to the Faith.* — *xxiv. 24. Felix heard him concerning the Faith.* *Rom. x. 8. That is the Word of Faith which we preach* — *Gal. i. 23. Preached the Faith he once destroyed* — and in many other Places. — Now the Word of the Gospel may fitly and properly be called, *The Faith*, on these three Accounts.

1. Because it is the Ground and Warrant of Faith; that which lays a Foundation for our believing: for there can be no Divine Faith without a Divine Testimony or Record, and this we have no where but in the Gospel. If God had not given us such a Testimony, believing or trusting in him would have been the highest Presumption in guilty Creatures, we should have had nothing to ground it upon. *Rom. x. 14. How can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?* Faith is the believing a Report, the Record God has given concerning his Son. *Isa. liii. 1. 1 John v. 10, 11.* The Gospel is this Report, this Record, which assures the Sinner that it is lawful and warrantable for him to believe, and so far from being Presumption, that he sins if he does not believe. It lays down no Foundation indeed for Persons to believe instantly and at first that they were elected, and that Jesus Christ died for them in particular. I know no Word of God that warrants any Man to believe this: For these are Things not to be known but by Faith and Holiness. — But it assures us, that Christ Jesus is a Saviour of Sinners, and that the chief of them may warrantably come to, and trust in him for Salvation: It assures them, that *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life. That he sent not his Son into the World to condemn the World, but that the World through him might be saved,* *John iii. 16, 17.*

The Sinner viewing this Divine Warrant, this sure Ground for Faith, believes that *it is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners, of whom he sees, and is persuaded, that he is the chief, 1 Tim. i. 15.* And upon the Foundation of the Word he closes with, and trusts in the Saviour for eternal Salvation : For the Word of the Gospel and Faith are Correlates, there is no separating of them. It at once contains the Ground of Faith, and the Thing to be believed.—

2dly, Because Faith is the great Duty which it requires of Sinners, to whom it is published and declared, *Mark xvi. 16. i. 15. Believe the Gospel ; Go preach the Gospel to every Creature, he that believeth shall be saved. — This is his Commandment, that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ. 1 John iii. 23.* Hence we read of the Obedience of, or to the Faith, *Rom. i. 5. and xvi. 26.* Faith is the first Act of acceptable and evangelical Obedience which the Soul puts forth, and it is that which stamps a Value on all its after Obedience : For without Faith it is impossible to please God.—This is the great Reason why Ministers in preaching the Gospel are commanded to insist so much on Believing, it is the great, the comprehensive Duty which it requires : For it unites the Soul to Jesus Christ, and influences it to all other Acts of holy Obedience, and enables it to be fruitful in every good Word and Work.

3. Because it is the great Mean and Instrument in the Hand of the Holy Spirit for the working, nourishing and perfecting Faith in the Soul. There is a Word of divine Appointment pass'd upon the Gospel of the Grace of God, constituting it the ordinary Mean for working Faith in the Souls of Men ; hence it is called, *The Word of Faith, Rom. x. 8. and ver. 17. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.*—It not only is in its own Nature the Ground and Foundation of Faith, and contains the great things necessary to be believed, but it also by the Spirit of God's breathing on, and putting a sovereign Efficacy in it, produces the thing itself, and is the great Mean by which the Sinner is conquered into believing. *2 Cor. x. 4. For the Weapons of*

our Warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong Holds, casting down Imaginations, and every high Thing that exalteth itself against the Knowledge of God, and bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ.

And as it is the Mean of begetting, so it is also of nourishing this precious Grace, hence the Apostle *Peter*, first Epist. Chap. i. 23. and Chap. ii. 2. points out the Word of the Gospel, as both the incorruptible Seed, and the incorruptible Food of that new Life, which is communicated to the Soul in Regeneration. The Word is the same thing to Faith, that Food is to our Bodies, it nourishes and strengthens them, and without it we should soon grow weak and die.—The Word when it comes with new Power, excites the Soul to the renewed Exercise of Faith; and we all know that every Principle is strengthen'd by repeated Acts.—The Word is the proper Food of Faith, and a Christian can no more live without it, than our Bodies can be supported without the daily Use of Meat and Drink. *Job xxiii. 12. I have esteemed the Word of his Mouth, more than my necessary Food. Thy Words were found, and I did eat them, and thy Word was unto me the Joy and rejoicing of my Heart,* Jer. xv. 16. Moreover, it is that which perfects Faith, and gives the finishing Stroke to it in the Christian's Soul, when he is passing into the eternal World.

Then he sees that nothing can bear the Weight of his Soul, but that Word, where he dropt the Anchor of his Hope, when he first believed; that Word which has been the Stay and Support of his Soul, during the Whole of his pilgrimage Journey; he views it now with Deliberation, and from a Perswasion that it is faithful and worthy of all Acceptation, embraces it, closes his Eyes in Death, and launches into the unseen World, venturing his eternal All upon it.—And then Faith indeed is finished: for in the other World, the Christian opens his Eyes in everlasting Life and Glory, where Faith is turned into Vision. Must not this Word then, my Brethren, which is of such excellent Use to us, both living and dying, be a precious Thing, and well worth the keeping? Which brings me more immediately to the Consideration of the Duty in

the Text, with Relation to it. — *I have kept the Faith.*

In general it imports two Things.

1. That it is committed to us as a sacred Depositum, or Trust for which we are to be accountable. — 'Tis in a special Manner indeed committed to Ministers, but not exclusive of private Christians: for the Faith is delivered to the Saints, and they are all of them to keep, and contend earnestly for it, *Jude* ver. 3. 'Tis, I say, in a special Manner committed to Ministers; hence the Apostle, 1st Chap. of this Epistle, v. 14. says to *Timothy*, *That good Thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost*, and 1st Epist. vi. 20. *O Timothy keep that which is committed to thy Trust.* — In both Texts 'tis express'd by one Word in the Original, παρακαταθήκην, which signifies a Depositum or Trust, something that is committed to one to keep, according to the Will and Instructions of him who commits it to him, and for which he is to be answerable. — Now we can be at no Loss to know what this was, which the Apostle says, was committed to the Trust and keeping of *Timothy*, it was even that which was committed to himself as a Minister, namely, *the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which* (says he) *was committed to my Trust*, 1 Tim. i. 11.

This is what in the Text he calls *the Faith*, which, he says, he had kept, and he makes this solemn Declaration of what had been his own Practice, with Relation to it, that *Timothy*, and all faithful Ministers to the End of the World, might keep *the Faith* as he had done. How then are we to keep it? I answer, we are to keep it believingly in our Hearts, which includes the daily Exercise of the Grace of Faith, or the believing the Gospel with particular Application for our own Salvation; without which we shall never be able to keep it in the Sense of the Text. — If the Truths of the glorious Gospel are not savingly inlay'd in our Hearts, who are Ministers; if we are not able, in some Measure to say, *We speak that we know, and testify that we have seen*, we'll make but a poor Account of that goodly Trust which is committed to us. — Our Hearts are to be Repositories for the Word, where we are to keep it as a precious Treasure. *Thy Word have I hid in my Heart*, Psal. cxix. 11.

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Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all Wisdom, Col. iii. 16. If we have felt the saving Power of it on our Hearts, we shall love to have it dwelling, and be careful to keep it there. — Again, we are to keep it faithfully, prudently, and edifyingly in our Lips, both in publick Preaching, and private Conversation; and truly, if we have the Belief of it in our Hearts, we shall love, as we have Opportunity, to talk of it; for it is a common Saying, and a true one; that which is nearest the Heart, is nearest the Mouth. — It is said concerning *Levi*, Mal. ii. 6, 7. *The Law of Truth was in his Mouth, and he did turn many away from Iniquity: for the Priests Lips should keep Knowledge, &c.* — Moreover, we must keep it universally in the Whole of our Walk and Conversation before the World, that every Part of it may be agreeable to that holy Gospel we profess. — Not only is it thus to be kept by Ministers, according to the Duties of their Station and Calling, but by all private Christians too according to theirs. — Brethren, here is one Way, in which we may, and ought to be all Preachers, as the Apostle has it. *Phil. ii. 15, 16. That ye may be blameless and harmless, the Sons of God without Rebuke, in the Minds of a crooked and perverse Generation, among whom shine ye as Lights in the World, holding forth the Word of Life.* — Exemplifying the Truth and Holiness of it in every Part of our Walk. — In this Manner are we all in our several Places to keep *the Faith* which is committed to our Trust.

2. It imports that such is our Situation in the World, that if we are not very careful thus to keep *the Faith*, we shall be in Danger of losing it. — Satan the grand Enemy of Jesus Christ, and of the Peace and Salvation of Men, has a particular Enmity, a deadly Spite against *the Faith*, and no Wonder; for it is the great Engine by which his Kingdom is battered down and destroyed. — Therefore he seeks by all Means to corrupt and destroy *the Faith*: For as the Strength of his Kingdom lies in Darkness, and the Gospel being the Light which maketh manifest his Devices, if he can but eclipse the Glory of that Light, or in any Measure destroy it, his Work is thereby so much easier among Men. Various are the Devices and Instruments he uses for this Purpose; some-

times he rages against *the Faith*, and raises Persecution of one Kind or other against the faithful Confessors of it, but in no Age has he succeeded greatly by this Device. Sometimes he casts out of his Mouth a Flood of Error, *Rev. xii. 15.* and thereby endeavours to root out *the Faith*, and though he has been more successful this Way than the other, yet in the Issue the Truth has always proved victorious, and been more firmly rooted and established. Yea sometimes he makes Use even of some of the Children of God themselves, and by them endeavours to corrupt *the Faith*.—Thus we have often seen that even holy and good Men, by unwary Concessions to the Adversaries of Truth, and by a false Moderation and mistaken Charity, have done great Harm to the Interest of the Gospel; Yea many otherwise worthy and valuable Men, and real Friends to the Truth, have many Times done great Harm by indulging some peculiar *Nosstrum* or other, and where this is the Case we often find they shew more Zeal in Defence of such Opinions than of all the Truths they hold. — By these and many other such Methods *the Faith* is in Danger of being corrupted, and we in Danger of losing it; and therefore we are by all Means to seek, get and keep it, as we would do our Life.— In Things pertaining to *the Faith* we are to follow no Man be he ever so great, holy, or learned, further than he has the Word of God on his Side. And it is not every Pretence to Scripture that in this Case ought to satisfy us; we must look narrowly with our own Eyes, and examine Doctrines and Opinions with the same Carefulness we would do suspicious Coin, by bringing them to, and trying them by the Touchstone of the Word, weighing them in the Balances of the Sanctuary, and seeing whether they come up to the full Value of the Standard fixed there. — Seeing then we are in Danger of losing *the Faith*, through the Heedlessness, Indifferency, and Lukewarmness of some, and the cunning Craftiness of others, who lie in wait to deceive, great Need have we to be diligent and faithful in keeping *the Faith*, that we may approve ourselves to him who has committed this goodly and precious Trust into our Hands. And if we would do so, we must keep it sound and intire in
Opposition

Opposition to all who would rob us of any Part of it:— For in no case are we to part with, or tamely yield the smallest Fragment of Truth. — And in order to this, 'tis necessary we should be well acquainted with our Bibles, and with the System of Truths taught there, with the necessary Connection there is between one Truth and another, and then we shall see the Worth of what some may account but a small Matter: For tho' 'tis granted, every Truth in Religion is not of equal Importance; yet when we consider, that the smallest Truth has such a necessary Connection with the greatest, as a Part has with the Whole, we should part with none of it.—Again, we must keep it pure, and by itself, in Opposition to such as would mix it with their own vain or pernicious Notions.—In a particular manner Ministers ought to keep it pure and unmixed in preaching it. To this Purpose the Apostle speaks, 2 Cor. ii. 17. *For we are not as many which corrupt the Word of God: but as of Sincerity, — but as of God, in the Sight of God speak we in Christ.* — The Word is most powerful when it appears in its own native Plainness and Simplicity; — not only when it is not mixed with Error, but when it is not mixed with the vain and unprofitable Conceits of human Eloquence and Oratory, such as become not the Majesty and Gravity of the Word of God. — Hence the Apostle exhorts *Timothy* in keeping *the Faith*, to avoid profane and vain Babblings, and Oppositions of Science falsely so called, 1 Tim. vi. 20. — Moreover, we must keep it in an honest sincere upright Manner, in Opposition to all Sale or Surrender of it.—*Buy the Truth*, says the Spirit of God, *and sell it not*, Prov. xxiii. 23. Buy it at any Rate, and sell it at no Rate.—The World will be making its Offers to us, to part and give up with *the Faith*, to save our Name, Credit, Ease and Wealth, or to purchase them; but we must hearken to no such Offers, they who do so, are like Children who part with Jewels for a Trifle. Some indeed are weak enough to do so, the Apostle speaks of one in the Context, v. 10. *Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present World,* And O what a poor and foolish Bargain did he make! to give up with *the Faith* for a present World, which he embraced with such Affection
and

and Choice, as the Word signifies. — Had any one been present when *Demas* was a dying, and seen how the World made then a perfidious Retreat from him, when he stood most in need of Comfort, and compared his Manner of leaving it with that of the Apostle in the Text, who *kept the Faith*, and let the World go, he would surely have pitied the one, and envied the other. — Once more we must keep it with undaunted Resolution and Courage, in Opposition to open Violence, which the Enemies of the Gospel sometimes use when they would forcibly rob us of *the Faith*. We must not be afraid of their stout Words, or high Looks, their Threatenings or their Scoffs; we must keep and hold the Faith as we would do our Life, yea, we must part with the one sooner than the other. — Thus did the noble Company of Martyrs who are set before us as an Example in this, *Rev. xii. 11. And they overcame by the Blood of the Lamb, and by the Word of their Testimony, and they loved not their Lives unto the Death.* — We must in Spite of all Opposition, *hold fast the Form of sound Words, in Faith and Love, 2 Tim. i. 13. And contend earnestly* (like Persons in an Agony, as the Word is) *for the Faith once delivered to the Saints, Jude ver. 3.* — I come now to the

III. Observation. To encourage all the sincere Servants of Jesus Christ, to fight the good Fight, to finish their Course, and to keep the Faith, there is a Crown of Righteousness laid up for them; an Eternity of Bliss awaits them in the other World. —

Here again, the Apostle seems to allude to what was usual in the *Olympian Games*. — At those Exercises there was a Judge who order'd the Games, appointed Laws to the Contenders, by which they were to conduct themselves, and then adjudged the Crown to the Conqueror. — This Crown was hung upon the Mark, or Goal, in View of the Contenders, to animate them to exert their utmost Skill and Vigour, and not to give over, till by the Laws they were intitled to the Prize. *Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown.* — What is this Crown? The Scripture shall answer this for me. There it has three Names given it. — A Crown of Life. *Rev. ii. 10. Be thou*

faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life. A Crown of Glory. 1 Pet. v. 4. *And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, then shall ye receive a Crown of Glory, which fadeth not away.* — And here in the Text, a Crown of Righteousness. — How great are these Blessings, and how exactly suited to our Condition! Life, Righteousness and Glory! But when we add eternal to them, how greatly is the Bliss accented! May I be allowed further to say, in Answer to the Question, what is this Crown? that God himself is it. — I am warranted by his Word to say so, *Isa. xxviii. 5. In that Day shall the Lord of Hosts be for a Crown of Glory, and for a Diadem of Beauty unto the Residue of his People.* Whatever Reference these Words may have in their primary Meaning, to the Safety and Prosperity of the People of *Judah*; 'tis certain, in their ultimate and full Meaning, they respect the everlasting Happiness and Glory of his People in the heavenly State: for as one well observes on the Place, “ Whatever Glory “ and Beauty is attributed to the most flourishing State “ of the Church on Earth, is certainly true in a more “ elevated Sense of immortal Felicity, with God in Heaven.” — The Dignity and Happiness of Human Nature, in its State of primitive Integrity, consisted in its resembling the divine Image, in Knowledge, Righteousness and Holiness; but when thro' Sin, we lost and defaced that Image, we might truly say, *the Crown is fallen from our Head; wo unto us, we have sinned.* — The great Design of the Gospel, is to restore the Human Nature to its former Dignity: yea, I may say, it is now exalted above what it would have been, if *Adam* had never sinned, by being taken into a personal Union with the Divine Nature, when the Son of God assumed it. — We begin to be restored to this Dignity, when we are renewed in the Spirit of our Minds by the Grace of God, in Regeneration, and when Holiness is compleated in Heaven, then the Crown, spoken of in the Text is set on our Heads; for then we are put in Possession of that Glory and Happiness, in full Conformity to the Divine Image, to which we were predestinated, and called by the Grace of God. — The Crown of Life, Righteousness or Glory; then

then is his conferring Life, everlasting Righteousness and Glory on us, of which Himself is the inexhaustible Fountain. — He is their Life, *with thee is the Fountain of Life*, Psal. xxxvi. 9. *He is their Light and Glory*, Isa. lx. 19. *The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting Light, and thy God thy Glory*. — He is their Righteousness; for they will forever shine in Heaven, adorned with that compleat Robe, that spotless, and every Way perfect Righteousness, which is put upon them by Him, whose Name is, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. — In a Word, He is the All of their Happiness, the Center of their Rest, the Maintainer of their Peace, the eternal Source of their Pleasure and Joy. — O bright! O glorious Crown! never fading and everlasting! how amazing is it that any of *Adam's* ruined Race should be thus adorned!

There are two Things remarkable in the Words concerning this Crown, which I shall do little more than mention, that I may hasten to the Application.

1. 'Tis here said to be *a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the Righteous Judge shall give*. — We are not to imagine, that it is called a Crown of Righteousness, because it is merited by the Saints, as if it were the Reward of their own Righteousness, their own Doings and Sufferings; by no Means. — The whole of Salvation, from first to last, is owing to the meritorious Efficacy of the Obedience and Sufferings of Christ; his perfect Righteousness and to nothing else. — Hence we are said *to reign in Life*, — and *Grace reigns through Righteousness, unto eternal Life, through Jesus Christ*, Rom. v. 17. 21. *The Gift of God is eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord*, Ch. vi. ult. And how can it otherwise be? for the Strength which is necessary, to enable the Christian to do, and the Patience to suffer the Will of God, is as much of Grace, as the purchasing the Inheritance itself is. — The same Grace that has purchased the one, freely bestows the other, as a necessary Preparation for it. — Whatever Noise has been made about Merit on Earth, there will be no Merit heard of among the Saints in Heaven, but the Merit of that Blood that purchased Hea-

ven, that fitted them for it, and brought them there. — And yet it is a Piece of distributive Justice in the Lord the Righteous Judge, to bestow this Crown: 'Tis agreeable to his original Purpose and Design concerning them; 'tis agreeable to his gracious Promises in his Word, on which he has caused them to hope; and these Promises being made first to Christ, (who is the first great Heir of Promise) as the Purchase of his Blood, or the Fruit of his fulfilling all Righteousness; 'tis an Act of Justice to bestow the Reward which yet agrees well with its being a Free-gift. —

2. 'Tis said to be *laid up for them*; where is it laid up? in Heaven, yea I may say in God himself: *For our Life is hid with Christ in God*, Col. iii. 3. 'Tis in a sure Hand, Enemies can't come at it; they may deprive us of our earthly Substance and of our Lives too, but our Crown is above their Reach. Moreover, it speaks out the Purity, the incorruptible Nature, and the Perpetuity of the Enjoyments of the Saints in Heaven, nothing that is subject to withering or decay can have place there, *'tis a Crown that fadeth not away*, 1 Pet. v. 4. 'tis pure unmixed Glory that will be ever growing. ---- But, alas! we talk in the Dark when we speak of this Subject, and often-times multiply Words without Knowledge: For when our Minds have gone their utmost Length, as far as they are capable, in our present State of Darkness and Imperfection: [I don't mean, in giving Scope to Fancy, but even in the Way of believing, and keeping in the Tract of Holy Scripture]. When I say we have gone our utmost Length in contemplating this Glory, we are beat back on that sweet and wonderfully great Word, *Isa. lxiv. 4. For since the Beginning of the World Men have not heard, nor perceived by the Ear, neither hath the Eye seen, O GOD, besides thee what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.*

There is one Thing more in the Text which I shall just touch in a cursory Manner, and that is, the believing Assurance which the Apostle had of this Crown's being laid up for him. *Henceforth there is laid up for me.* O the Sweetness there is in this Word, *for me!* Which
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God the righteous Judge shall give unto me! When the Believer is enabled to say on good Grounds, What a refined Joy does it yield! 'tis indeed Joy which is unspeakable and full of Glory — and it sinks the imaginary Glory of a present World, yea and all our Trials and Afflictions too into nothing. — Moreover the Apostle adds, *and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.* — The Holy Spirit has in several Places of the New Testament given it as a Part of the Character of the Children of God, that they love and desire the second Coming of Christ, *Phil. iii. 20. For our Conversation is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Thess. i. 9, 10. — Ye turned to God from Idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from Heaven, Heb. ix. 28. And to them that look for him shall he appear the second Time, Rev. xxii. 20. — Surely I come quickly, Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.* — I will not indeed deny that true Christians at Times, when under Fits of Unbelief, may have a secret Dread of his appearing, and may be ready to tremble at the Thoughts of it. — But I may be allowed to say, in this they act out of Character; when Grace is in Exercise they must, they cannot but love his appearing; and even at their lowest they cannot but love the End of his appearing, *viz.* That he may finish the Mystery of God, and complete the Salvation of his Elect, in bestowing upon each of them his Crown of Righteousness, when he shall say, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World, Matth. xxv. 34.* One Thing more I would remark, and then I have done; and that is, 'Tis evident the Apostle makes it one Ground of his Consolation and Joy, that the Crown will be bestowed on others as well as himself, even on all them that love his appearing, which comprehends all the Saints which have been, are now, or shall be in the World to the End of Time. — Grace does not make Persons narrow and selfish, it does not incline them to make a Monopoly of the Riches and Glory of the Kingdom into which it brings them, on the contrary, it enlarges their Hearts in a God-like Manner, and makes

makes them rejoice that others are made Partakers of the same Dignity and Happiness with themselves. — In this the Saints differ widely from them who wear Crowns in this World: For none of them can bear a Rival, much less endure an Equal, in their several Kingdoms. — But in this Kingdom (as one well observes,) “ There will be no Envy nor Jealousies, but all “ Kings, each with his Crown, and each rejoicing in the “ Glory of another; and all in his who that Day shall “ be *all in all*.

’Tis now Time to shut up what has been said, with some practical Improvement.

1. We may here see that this World is not our Home or Abode, no, ’tis only as an Inn; and no wise Man, when he is on a Journey, thinks of dwelling in his Inn, where he is only to lodge for a Night or two; on the contrary, as one who is weary of the Noise and Confusion of it, he’s glad, when the Time comes that he is to leave it. — ’Tis as a foreign Country to Travellers, through which they are only to pass; and while they are passing through it, they ought to remember they are not at Home — ’Tis as a Theatre on which we act our several Parts for a little Time, and then the Curtain drops, and we retire. — If we were always helped so to maintain this View of Things, as that it should influence the Whole of our Practice in making us dispatch living Work, dying and leaving this World would not be such a hard and shocking Thing, as alas! for the most Part it is: — We would not find it so difficult to say with the Apostle in the Text, *I am ready, and the Time of my Departure is at Hand*.

2. We may here see the remarkable Difference between Saints and Sinners, both in Life and Death. — Grace teaches Saints in a holy self-denied Manner to run the Race that is set before them, by aiming daily in the Strength of Divine Grace, to finish that Course of Obedience and Sufferings which the Lord in Providence sets before them. — They desire not to live in the World, but for his Glory and the Good of others. — Sinners they look no higher in their Aims than the pleasing them-

themselves, and studying their own Advantage in one Shape or other. — The Way of the holy Commandment, and the Way of the Cross, the strait and narrow Way in which all must walk that would see Heaven, they all of them inwardly dislike, and many of them shew it, though some of them are more open in this than others. — And as they differ widely in their Lives, so do they also in their Death, *Prov. xiv. 32. The Wicked is driven away in his Wickedness, but the Righteous hath Hope in his Death.* — Oh the secret Horror and Anguish of Mind wicked Persons sometimes feel, when they have the immediate Prospect of leaving this, and going into the eternal World! What dreadful Convulsions do the Love of the one, and the Dread of the other occasion in their Minds! And if any of them at Times show a Willingness to die, it proceeds either from Ignorance and Stupidity, or from a mad resolute Desperation. — But the Christian, when under the Exercise of Faith, can with a Pleasure and Joy, which is substantial and well-grounded, look into the unseen World, and think of leaving this, without a reluctant Thought, can look the grim King of Terrors in the Face, without being afraid with any Amazement; as knowing, he is now through the Death of Christ an unstung Enemy. — This has made many of the Saints to go off the Stage triumphing, even when they have been in the Jaws of Death, singing that triumphant Song, *Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil, for thou art with me, Psal. xxiii. 4. O Death where is thy Sting? O Grave where is thy Victory? The Sting of Death is Sin, and the Strength of Sin is the Law. But Thanks be to God, who giveth us the Victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57.*

'Tis true, this is not the Privilege of every Christian, to go off in this triumphant Manner; some are more in the Dark than others; but I may venture to say, all of them die in such a Manner, as verifies that Word, *Mark the perfect Man, and behold the Upright; for the End of that Man is Peace, Psal. xxxvii. 37.*

3. We may here see Christianity is not such an easy Matter, as the Generality, even of the Professors of Religion are apt to imagine. — It does not consist in a few superficial moral Changes in Life, nor in the rectifying of some vicious Habits of Mind, nor in Persons denying themselves the Use of some, or many of the Comforts of Life, nor in practising great Austerities on their Bodies, and the like; Pride and Self-righteousness may carry Persons a great Way in these Things, and yet they may be utter Strangers to the Life and Power of Religion.

That Religion, which is the Work of the Holy Spirit, goes deep, even to the Bottom of the Heart. — The Foundation of it is Union with Christ, and a new Nature, from which results Fellowship with him in his Death, whereby a deadly Wound is given to the Body of Sin, and the Christian, at the same Time that he is made alive unto God, is made to die daily to it. — From gracious and spiritual Principles, he is enabled to proclaim War against the Enemies of Christ within him, the Lusts of the Flesh and of the Mind; — Against all the Powers of Darkness also, and all their Auxiliaries; he is resolved, in the Strength of Divine Grace, no more to be found on their Side, but under the Banner of the Captain of Salvation, to fight the good Fight, without making Peace with, or turning his Back upon the Enemy, nor yet deserting the Service.

And oh how difficult is all this! *Verily the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth Violence, and the Violent take it by Force!* They who think this easy, are Strangers to their own Hearts, and Strangers to the Religion of Christ. — But this is our grand Encouragement who are engaged in this good Fight, and are running this Heavenly Race that is set before us, *stronger is he that is with us, than they who are against us. In due Time we shall reap, if we faint not.*

4. Here is Matter of Comfort and Rejoicing to all the faithful Servants and Disciples of Jesus Christ, under all the Trials and Hardships they endure in this World for his Sake, there's a glorious Crown laid up for them in
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the other World; and when this Crown shall be set upon their Heads, they will forget all the Toil and Sorrow they went through in the Field of Battle; yea, there is such a holy Serenity of Joy, which at Times fills the Christian's Soul, even in the hottest Conflicts he has with the Enemies of his Salvation, as more than compensates the present Pain. — So that on a just Comparison, and stating of Things, he is constrained to say with the Apostle, *Rom viii. 18. For I reckon that the Sufferings of this present Time, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory which shall be revealed in us.* — Not worthy to be compared indeed: for our present Sufferings will soon be over, but the Glory will last throughout Eternity. — And the Sufferings will leave no Impressions on the Minds of the Saints, but such as will accent their Glory, and accent their eternal Hallelujah's above. — We have a remarkable Scripture to this Purpose, *2 Cor. iv. 17. For our light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.* — How diminutively does the Apostle speak of the one, while he calls it light, and only for a Moment? but how ponderous, how substantial, how massy is every Word he uses with respect to the other? There is not such a Climax perhaps in all the Word of God, as there is in these Words; there is a beautiful Gradation upwards, which deserves particular Notice; Glory! a Weight of Glory! an eternal Weight of Glory! an exceeding and an eternal Weight of Glory! a more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory! a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory! What a rich Profusion (if I may say so) of Thought and Language is here! There is not, as one well observes on the Place, “Such a sublime and harmonious Expression, as the Apostle here uses, to be met with in other Authors, either Philosophers, Poets or Orators; for they had never such high and excellent Objects to think or speak of. He calls it, κατ’ ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν αἰώνιον βάρος δόξης, from Hyperbole to Hyperbole, a super Superlative, a superlatively excellent eternal Weight of Glory.” — ’Tis scarce possible, as judicious Commentators have observed, to

render this sublime Passage into any Language, without some of the Force, the Beauty and Strength of the Original transpiring in the Translation. — In a Word, Heaven only will be a sufficient Comment on this great Text. — Oh how should the believing Consideration of this Glory fill our Hearts with spiritual Consolation, so as to make us forget and despise all that is betwixt us and it!

5. Hence see what Ground of Comfort and Joy we have, with Respect to such of our Christian Friends, as have fallen asleep in Jesus, and gone to their eternal Rest. They have fought a good Fight, — have finished their Course, and are now entered on the Enjoyment of the Crown, that glorious Reward of rich and Free Grace, which Jesus has laid up for all his faithful Friends and Followers. — And should not we rejoice in their Happiness, and be glad that they are forever set beyond sinning or sorrowing any more? Surely if we were not exceeding selfish we would. — And now, my Brethren, it may be justly expected, that I should say something concerning that worthy Servant of Christ, our Dear and Reverend Brother, whose Death we all so justly lament, and is the mournful Occasion of our Meeting at this Time. — And here, I own, there should either be a great deal said, or nothing at all. — It is not indeed my Custom to speak any Thing concerning the Deceased on such Occasions, as I know the Practice has been justly blamed, as favouring of Flattery and Panegyrick; and I freely own, we ought to be exceeding cautious and modest in Cases of this kind, lest while we do no Good to the Dead, we do much Harm to the Living, by making them imagine, that let them live as they list, they shall be praised from the Pulpit when they are dead. — But our dearly beloved Friend and Brother was no ordinary Person, either as a Christian, or a Minister of the Gospel; and therefore, I hope, I shall be indulged in saying a few Things concerning his Character, in which I shall adhere religiously to what I know to be Truth. — That he was a Man of bright natural Parts could not be hid, it was evident to all who conversed with him, and those Abili-

ties were greatly improved by diligent Study and extensive Learning, in which he made great Proficiency at the University of *Glasgow*, where he studied Philosophy and Divinity some Years, under the learned Professors there; and took his Degree of Master of Arts before he left it. — But like a Man of true Worth and Merit, he made no vain Shew of his Learning; but on the contrary, on all Occasions endeavoured to hide it. — He had a lively Imagination, and a correct Judgment, which enabled him to deliver his Sentiments on any Subject, with so much Justness and Accuracy, as was truly delightful to all who conversed with him.

As a Christian, he was holy, tender and circumspect to a great Degree: *For in all things he shewed himself a Pattern of good Works.* — He was a close humble Walker with God; being in an uncommon Measure exercised unto Godliness; and this made him love, and strictly practise the Duties of the Study and Closet. — He was tender and cautious in his Words, and though he had as great a Measure of a natural easy Eloquence as any Man I ever knew, being never at a Loss for proper and just Expressions on all Occasions, yet he was so far from cultivating this natural Gift, that in common Conversation and Company he seemed to lay it under severe Restraints.

As a Minister of the Gospel he shone with a peculiar Lustre, was a close hard Student, and I may say, made Conscience of labouring in the Closet for what he delivered in the Publick; and preached his Sermons to himself before he preached them to others. — It was easy to discover by what he delivered, that he did not serve God with that which cost him nothing, and that he was a wise Scribe instructed into the Kingdom, a Workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth, and giving every one his Portion in due Season. —

He was certainly a very great Master of Style, not only in Point of Justness, but also as to its Beauties and Elegancies, which made his Pulpit-Performances truly charming to all who heard him. — The natural

Turn his Genius had for Poetry made this exceeding easy to him, so that it was next to impossible for him to express himself even on the meanest and most ordinary Subjects, but with the greatest Beauty and Exactness. — He was modest and humble, I had almost said to an Excess, being so diffident of his own Abilities, that he was ready to prefer every one to himself; and this, tho' it made all his other Graces and Qualifications shine in the Eyes of such as were true Judges of Worth, yet it often made him not so extensively useful as otherwise he might have been: For many a one has made a more considerable Figure in Life than he did, with not the half of either his Grace or Learning. — He was painful and diligent in all the Parts of his Work, and was one who indeed travailed in Birth, that Christ might be formed in Souls. — How successful he was in this, especially of late, the great Day of Accounts I believe will discover, when they shall appear as his Glory and Crown of rejoicing. —

He was pleasant and desirable in Life, and I may say more so at his Death: For when he came to the setting Point he shone out brightly, like the Sun in a calm serene Evening, he set without a Cloud. — He had a full and unshaken Assurance of his Interest in the Love of God, and bright Manifestations of that Love to his Soul, which made his Expressions of it on his Death-bed ravishing to all his Christian Friends who visited him. With what Pleasure and Joy did he often utter such Expressions as these; O I long to be gone! I long to be gone, and freed from Sin and Sorrow! I long to be where Jesus is, to see him as he is! I long to put off this mortal Body, that Mortality may be swallowed up of Life! Oh I would not return again to this World, it is indeed Cabul, a dirty and unpleasant World! I shall soon be in that shining World, in Immanuel's Land, where Glory dwells for evermore. — His Love has left a Perfume, a sweet Savour in my Heart, and Eternity itself will be too short to praise him. — Oh what a Covenant, what a Rock have we to rest upon! how firm it is! O what Comforts, what Consolations have I had from it! With such Joy as this

this methinks I could bear the burning of this Fever throughout Eternity, and not feel it! I know that my Redeemer liveth! this is Glory begun! I am filled with God! O how faithful is God! He has said to me that he would satisfy me with Life, and I am fully satisfied. — I want nothing but to have the Clay Walls of this Body broken down. — Oh I never saw so much as I do now! I want a whole Eternity to praise!

When he was first taken ill of the Fever, he told me and some other Christian Friends he apprehended it would issue in Death, and gave this Reason for it, that for some Months past he had had so much of God in secret, that he never met with any thing like it. — He particularly mentioned how much Dr. *Owen's* Declaration of the glorious Mystery of the Person of Christ God and Man, had been bless'd to him, especially the last Chapter of that Book, concerning the Exercise of the Mediator Office of Christ in Heaven, and the State of the Worship there. And when he spoke of that Subject, it was with such Elevation and Fervour of Spirit as was like to overpower Nature. — He often spoke with great Pleasure of his spending the Week before he was taken ill among his People, conversing with them about the State of their Souls, when he found to his unspeakable Joy, that upwards of twenty Persons he hoped had been savingly wrought upon of late under his Ministry; which made him cry out, — O amazing! that I should be honoured to be in any Measure useful in the Church of Christ. He frequently spoke with great Affection of his People, saying, O my little Flock! nothing in this World is so near my Heart as that Handful of People I stand related to. O Sir, said he to me, Let that little Flock have a Place near your Heart. — Some Time before he died, he said to one, Oh the amazing, the astonishing, the unconceivable Glory of the other World! what Discoveries have I had of it this Day! I long, I long to be there! I must have an Eternity to praise! O the unspeakable, the substantial Joys I feel! my Life is hid with Christ in God! — To another he said a little before his Death; I am just ready to join the general Assembly and Church
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of the First-born, I am just ready to shout the Victory! I beseech thee shew me thy Glory!

These and many other such gracious and sweet Expressions dropt from him during his Illness, and many more might have been gathered, but his Friends often interrupted him, and desired he would spare himself, and not speak so much.—One Thing I think is very remarkable, that tho' his Fever was a very bad one, and he a strong robust Man, full of Flesh and Blood, yet it never, so far as I could see, and I saw him very frequently, it never, I say, once seized his Head, or impaired his Judgment; but he had the full Exercise of his Reason and Speech to the last, and O what a glorious Use did he make of both?

What he was, as a Husband and a Brother, you who are his mourning Relations need not be told; he has a Testimony in your Hearts and Consciences, and you have Reason to bless God ever you stood so nearly related to such a Man.—May the Lord sanctify the unspeakable Loss you have sustained, and enable you by his Grace, to leave the same favourable Memorial behind you he has done.

He had a Generosity in his Temper, that was opposite to every Thing that was mean, and his Liberality to the Poor knew no Bounds, but what his Circumstance set to it, which were but straitned: But what Providence denied him this Way, was made up by the cheerful, the willing and ready Mind, with which he gave what he had; and he always chose to do it in a very private hidden Manner; for he never sounded a Trumpet. There was a sweet Mixture of the fine Gentleman, and the humble sincere Christian, in his Carriage and Deportment: for he had a great Measure of that Courtesy, which proceeds from a sincere, and a friendly Mind.—His Conversation in Company was favourable and edifying: for his Lips were always dropping what had a Tendency to excite that Spirituality of Mind and Discourse, which is Life and Peace.

In a Word, I may say, that (setting aside the unavoidable Failings incident to the best of Men, in the present

sent imperfect State) there are few Persons in Life, of whom it might be more truly said, that he was blameless and harmless, and without Rebuke.

And as for you who sat under his Ministry, and were bless'd with his Labours, wherewithal shall I comfort you? Your Loss is indeed exceeding great, I had almost said irreparable. — Time permits me not to speak so fully to you as I would incline; I shall only mention two Scriptures to you, and leave them with you. One is in *Psal. xviii. 46. The Lord liveth, blessed be my Rock: and let the God of my Salvation be exalted.* — Your Minister, it is true, is dead, but the great Minister of the New Testament liveth, the Residue of the Spirit is with him, and to him you must go by Faith. — Pray that he may pour out of his Spirit on others who are left behind, and that he may send forth many faithful Labourers into his Harvest. — Pray, in a particular Manner, that he may bless his other Servant in this Place, * and pour out a double Portion of his Spirit upon him, that his Labours may be as much blessed to you, as those of your late dear Pastor now with the Lord were.

The other is, *Heb. xiii. 7. Remember them who have spoken the Word of God to you, whose Faith follow, considering the End of their Conversation, &c.* — Remember the Words of Truth, which from Time to Time you have heard from the Lips of your late worthy Pastor; and remember, that tho' Ministers die, yet the Word spoken by them in the Name of the Lord, dieth not: for it is a living Word that endureth for ever. — Believe it, my Brethren, the Word of the Gospel you have

* The Day this Sermon was preached, the Reverend Mr. H——, Pastor to the other Congregation at *Wethersfield*, told me he had some Reason to think, that the Congregation lately under Mr. *Harrison's* Care, or the greatest Part of them, would join with his People, without looking out for another Minister, which made me speak in this Manner to them. — But since that Time, we have found that in this we were mistaken. — But in writing out this Sermon for the Press, I had no Freedom to leave out what I then spoke, which I hope will give Offence to none.

heard

heard from Time to Time, will follow you into the other World, and will there witness either for or against you, according to the Entertainment you have given it. — Remember the holy Conversation with which he backed his Preaching among you, whereby he exemplified his Doctrine in a lively Manner, and adorned it. — Oh how dreadful it will be for any of you to perish from under such a Ministry! *But, Brethren, we are perswaded better Things of you, and Things that accompany Salvation, tho' we thus speak, Heb. vi. 9.*

Lastly, Let us all be exhorted to enter deeply on the Consideration of the great Purposes in this Text, and to endeavour, in the Strength of Divine Grace, to be Followers of them, who through Faith and Patience, do now inherit the Promises. That when we come to the utmost Point of Life, and have the boundless Prospect of the eternal World before us; we may then, when we are shutting our Eyes in Death, have it to say, with this blessed Apostle, I am now ready, and the Time of my Departure is at hand, I have fought a good Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the Righteous Judge shall give me at that Day, and not to me only, but to all them also that love his Appearing.

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